

Focus

A Newsletter for Customers of the
GSA Public Buildings Service, Mid-Atlantic Region

Winter 2001

Delivering Federal Courtrooms for the 21st Century

Over the past several years, GSA has been assisting the federal courts as they've expanded their courtroom needs in various locations in the Mid-Atlantic Region. GSA has long embraced the value of partnering with its customers and project contractors. The success of several recently completed court projects is credited to these strong partnerships. Strategic long-term planning and innovative thinking has led to the creation of some very forward-thinking, technologically advanced courtrooms.



*Recently renovated courtroom in
Martinsburg, West Virginia*

One such example is a recently completed courtroom for the U.S. District Court in the Martinsburg Federal Building in Martinsburg, West Virginia. "A strong partnership between the courts, GSA, and the contractors proved to be critical in our courtroom project," says Wally Edgell, Ph.D., Clerk of Court, Northern District of West Virginia. "We realized early this high-tech courtroom would only be realized if we worked together."

The courtroom, originally built in 1961, now supports the integration of state-of-the-art courtroom technology, yet still maintains the dignity of a traditional courtroom. The technology includes a new Evidence Presentation System,

including multiple flat screen monitors at the jury box and judge's bench. The system allows attorneys to electronically display evidence to the judge and jury by connecting their laptops into the Evidence Presentation System through recessed floor boxes at the attorney tables. A projection screen, concealed above the ceiling, can be lowered and retracted using controls at the clerk's station. A new sound system includes infrared transmitters for the hearing impaired, along with a mechanism which generates "white noise" that ensures the judge's private bench conferences are not heard by the jury. Lastly, the entire infrastructure to support all of the courtroom technology has been concealed within the stately millwork.

(continued on page 2)

Highlights Inside:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| From the Desk of the ARA | 2 |
| SSA Recognizes Commitment and Dedication of GSA Employees | 3 |
| Delivering Workspace Solutions Quickly | 3 |
| GSA Employees Mentor Local Students | 4 |
| GSA Builds Your Portal to Agency Information | 5 |
| Electric Deregulation: GSA Team Saves Federal Agencies Millions of Dollars in Energy Costs | 6 |
| GSA Project Manager John Morrell Honored by SSA | 7 |

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From the Desk of the ARA...

Many of us are faced with the challenge of growing demands coupled with shrinking resources. It is especially in these challenging times that we've come to appreciate the power of partnership.

In January 1998, looking ahead toward the enormous task of completing their decennial census, the Bureau of Census formed a partnership with GSA called the Census/GSA Joint Venture 2000. The partnership allowed Census the freedom to provide greater focus on their enumeration competencies, because they could rely on GSA's logistical expertise to provide them with the workspace, supplies, and services they required.

During the full duration of the Joint Venture, GSA provided Census with 1,027 fully operational facilities throughout the 50 states and Puerto Rico, and GSA maintained these facilities during the Census operation without loss of a minute of operational time. GSA equipped Census with more than 4.5 million square feet of space; filled 196,732 supply orders; transported 700 million pounds of printed materials; delivered (and removed upon completion of duties) 113,365 pieces of furniture; installed 19,230 telephone lines; completed 40,000 telecommunication orders; installed more than 3.3 million feet of voice-grade wiring and 114,000 feet of data cabling; and installed 650 telephone key systems. Employees from all areas of the GSA and Census organizations worked together to integrate the delivery of these services in accordance with the geographic boundaries of Census' 12 regions.

The Census/GSA partnership proved very powerful. Census completed their decennial operations earlier than initially expected, and many Census leaders have stated their belief that the Census 2000 was their best ever.

We are certain the year ahead will present us all with enormous challenges and vast opportunities. We believe the key to overcoming those challenges and reaping the benefits of those opportunities is the power of partnership. We're dedicated to growing our existing partnerships and establishing relationships with new partners in the year ahead. We wish you a healthy and prosperous 2001!



Jan Ziegler
Assistant Regional Administrator
Public Buildings Service
Mid-Atlantic Region

Courtrooms *(continued from page 1)*

A similar successful project provided nine additional courtrooms and 12 chambers for the U.S. District Court located in the James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At the start of the project, the project team was faced with the constraint of low ceiling height in spaces targeted for new courtrooms. A multi-faceted team comprised of GSA, the U.S. District Court, and the architectural engineering firm Ewing Cole Cherry Brott worked together to explore innovative solutions. Drywall was used to create "beams" giving the illusion of a conference ceiling. Suspended ceiling tiles were used to create a barrel vault ceiling just below the drywall ceiling. Creative lighting applied between the drywall ceiling and the barrel vault creates the perception that the ceiling is higher than it really is. Clerk of Court Michael Kunz of the U.S. Court's Eastern District says, "The additional courtrooms enhance the efficient administration of justice and...provide litigants who are in custody with more timely access to justice."



Newly constructed courtroom in Scranton, Pennsylvania

A third example of successful partnering focuses on six courtrooms within the William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse located in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

One of the newly built courtrooms hosts a complete courtroom technology package built to the U.S. Court Design Guide standards. Similar to the previously mentioned courtroom in Martinsburg, this courtroom includes an Evidence Presentation System along with CRT monitors at the jury box and judge's bench. In addition, the courtroom contains a document camera mounted above the witness stand serving to display documents to the witness at hand. "The courtroom technology enlivens the court proceedings, enhances juror comprehension, and improves the efficiency of trials," says the Honorable Thomas I. Vanaskie. Five other courtrooms slated for future use within this complex have been provided with the necessary technology infrastructure and are ready for new technology.

Strong partnerships among GSA, the Courts, and project contractors have been instrumental in facilitating strategic planning and creative innovations. These partnerships are greatly contributing to the increased ease of conducting court business in our judicial system.

SSA Recognizes Commitment and Dedication of GSA Employees

In September 2000, the GSA project team that managed the relocation of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Germantown District Office to the Veterans Administration Building, located at 5000 Wissahickon Avenue in Philadelphia, was honored with an SSA Regional Commissioner's Citation.

The award noted the accomplishments of the GSA team who moved SSA in record time from an undesirable lease location to the federal space they requested.

SSA had occupied successive leases in its Germantown Service area, each with its own problems. The most recent lease developed problems within the first few years when an incompatible tenant took occupancy of the remainder of the building.

SSA and GSA found a perfect solution—move SSA into space the Veteran's Administration (VA) no longer needed in their facility. GSA was able to negotiate an early termination of SSA's existing lease, and the project team went to work to build out new space for SSA in record time.

Within six months, GSA and SSA were able to design and construct new space for SSA in the VA Building.

"Even though everyone involved realized it was almost an impossible timeframe, we received full commitment from GSA to meet the goal," says SSA Field Services Team Leader Jim Bentley. "SSA was fortunate to have such a dedicated group of GSA employees." GSA's commitment, dedication, and expertise enabled SSA to relocate their office as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Delivering Workspace Solutions Quickly

At GSA, we pride ourselves in our ability to expeditiously fulfill the unique requirements of our customers. When the U.S. Army sought a home for a new Department of Defense Biometrics Fusion Center, they were looking for quality space to fulfill their unique set of requirements. And they were looking for that space to be delivered quickly. They chose GSA.

In July 2000, GSA awarded a lease for space to house their new Biometrics Fusion Center. We ensured that the space was built-out to meet the Army's unique requirements and assisted with the selection and purchase of furniture. Six weeks later, the Biometrics Fusion Center opened its new facility in Bridgeport, West Virginia.

Biometrics is the use of a person's physical traits as computer passwords and includes fingerprint, retina and iris scans, voice prints,

hand and finger geometry, face recognition, keystroke dynamics and wrist vein recognition. The Biometrics Fusion Center will be utilizing these methods to advance the Army's task of safeguarding top-level computer systems. The facility includes a large ADP room and a test and evaluation center that allow the Center to experiment with and troubleshoot new products and programs.

In preparing for the opening of their new Biometrics Fusion Center, the Army worked primarily with Stacy Keefer, a GSA Realty Specialist in GSA's Charleston, West Virginia office.

"Stacy means what she says and does what she promises," says Paul Howe, Deputy Director of the Biometrics Fusion Center. "She found innovative ways to help us keep costs down." GSA understands the importance of being a service provider who delivers on



*Biometrics Fusion Center
Bridgeport, West Virginia*

promises and watches the bottom line.

GSA's mission is to provide you with quality workspace solutions so you can concentrate on your mission. When looking for expertly delivered space and furnishings, the U.S. Army turned to GSA. GSA concentrated on providing the U.S. Army with a home for their Biometrics Fusion Center, allowing the U.S. Army to concentrate their efforts on establishing their Biometrics program in that new home.

GSA Employees Are Making a Difference in Lives of Community Children

Since 1984, volunteers from the General Services Administration (GSA) Mid-Atlantic Region have been actively mentoring and tutoring students of the Kearny Academics Plus Elementary School in Philadelphia. The Adopt-a-School program serves as a wonderful example of how we, as a nation, can strengthen partnerships between the business community, government, and public schools.

Through the GSA program, each GSA volunteer is paired up with one student whom Kearny teachers have deemed in need of extra academic support and individual mentoring. GSA volunteers travel to the Kearny school each Wednesday to help the students in math, language arts, and social studies. Each GSA volunteer is assigned only one



GSA Project Architect Sharon McDowell-Etienne with Jordan, a student at Kearny Academics Plus Elementary School

effect change and improve the quality of life for others," says GSA Project Architect Sharon McDowell-Etienne, a volunteer with GSA's Adopt-a-School program. "I've

week to work with their GSA tutors/mentors. To date, more than 250 students have benefited from these programs.

"We are very grateful to the GSA volunteers who continue to inspire and help our students reach their highest potential," says Kearny Principal Eileen Spagnola. "The relationships they have established with our students have inspired many of our students to work much harder and achieve better results academically and in their behavior. For this we are truly grateful."

"We are very grateful to GSA volunteers who continue to inspire and help our students reach their highest potential."

*~ Eileen Spagnola, Principal
Kearny Academics Plus Elementary School*

student for the entire school year, allowing the GSA volunteers to focus on the unique strengths and weaknesses of his or her student. The GSA volunteers serve as tutors and role models for the community children.

"I think it is important to get involved in the community...I've been able to

received much joy and satisfaction in knowing I've helped several children academically and by being a positive role model for them."

In 1995, GSA expanded their program to include the Stoddard-Fleischer Middle School in Philadelphia. Students from Stoddard come to the GSA Regional Office Building once a

Many of us regularly offer charitable contributions through the Combined Federal Campaign. We know these contributions are making a profound difference in the lives of many people. GSA's tutoring/mentoring program demonstrates how the contribution of time can go a long way in making a difference in the lives of our nation's children.

GSA Builds Your Portal to Agency Information

In the last issue of *Focus*, we discussed some of the offerings on the PBS Mid-Atlantic Region web site at www.pbs3.gsa.gov. Since publication of that issue, we've published a page that provides links to national GSA sites offering information about pricing policy, reimbursable work authorizations (RWAs), and rent. These are frequently requested items that deal directly with your bottom line and we realize that quick access to them is important to you. Check out the Pricing, Rent, and Work Authorization page on our site at www.pbs3.gsa.gov/price_guide.htm. This page will lead you to search interfaces for your rent bills and RWAs as well as to the Customer Guide to New Pricing. In the future, you will see this and other information similarly categorized on our national GSA site, www.gsa.gov, where these items are actually housed.

The pricing and RWA web sites are part of a larger effort to organize information resources in a way that makes sense to our customers, vendors, and other stakeholders. A visit to GSA's national site at www.gsa.gov will provide you with a newly designed site that categorizes information in a fashion similar to the large internet search engines.

Part of this evolution includes the ongoing consolidation of the information found on GSA regional sites throughout the nation into the national GSA web site at www.gsa.gov. We realize that our regional boundaries may be different than yours, and your interests may span several or all of the GSA regions. The premise is simple: you needn't know our organization to find the answers to your questions. The

national GSA site already includes some of the most popular content from various GSA web sites. The effort aims to eliminate redundant information, foster the creation of new content in response to your suggestions, and create a way for users to design their own views. Check out the MyGSA portion of www.gsa.gov. MyGSA allows you to create a custom view of all of the content you want to see, and only that content, by allowing you to add your favorite GSA sites as bookmarks. To use MyGSA, you need to create a username and

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www.gsa.gov

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password. After doing so, you will be able to return repeatedly to the custom set of bookmarks you create.

Already, you may locate some of the pricing and RWA information mentioned above by going to www.gsa.gov and drilling down through categories or by searching by keyword. The site is still in its infancy stages and new content is continually being added. We ask that you please bear with us as there are usually some growing pains associated with undertakings of this magnitude. The GSA national site is designed to be user-friendly, but if you do have any questions, please let us know. Whether the information you are looking for is currently presented locally or nationally, we remain committed to helping you find the answers to your questions about doing business with GSA. If you don't know where to start, please give us a call at 215-656-7400.

A Note of Thanks...

We want to thank all of our customers who took time out of their busy schedules to complete GSA Public Buildings Service's 2000 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Your input has provided us with valuable information we can use to improve service delivery within each of our buildings and to each of our customers.

Thank you!

ELECTRIC DEREGULATION

GSA Team Saves Federal Agencies Millions of Dollars in Energy Costs

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the Federal Interagency Policy Committee presented GSA employees Don Stiteler, Ken Shutika, Barbara McPhelim, Jerard Butler, and Lindsey Lee with a Federal Energy and Water Management Award in October 2000. The GSA team was honored for their accomplishments over the past few years in making energy usage less costly for the federal government.

Federally funded facilities within certain areas of Pennsylvania paid some of the highest electric rates in the country. In 1997, when the state of Pennsylvania decided to deregulate the electric industry, the decision spelled opportunity for the federal government. GSA recognized that combining GSA electric requirements with the requirements of other federally funded activities in the state would produce an account large enough to entice utility companies into offering the lowest electric rates available.

In November 1998, a GSA team was able to combine the electric requirements of 23 federal agencies and four federally funded non-profit organizations under a combined \$24.6 million procurement. The innovative approach saved the participating agencies a combined \$5 million in energy costs annually. And, with a GSA team handling the electric buy, procurement personnel within the other federally funded organizations were free to focus on the core missions of their agencies. A similar approach was applied in New Jersey in November 1999 when GSA combined the requirements of 21 federal agencies and non-profit organization in a \$15 million procurement that saved participating organizations \$2.35 million in energy costs.

"Many of the National Parks and National Park Service Units have participated (in GSA's combined electric procurement) with a considerable savings," says Don Zieman, Chief, Public Utility Management, National Park Service. "The National Park Service certainly

appreciates GSA's competitive contracting abilities and activities connected with the deregulation of electricity."

The GSA team's accomplishments have been featured in numerous publications including the *Washington Post*, *Government Procurement*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and *Power Markets Week*, increasing exposure and encouraging broader application of the innovative approach within government. The GSA team has also been recognized as award recipients in the Philadelphia Federal Executive Board's Excellence in Government Awards Program and as Energy Champions under the Federal Energy Management Program's *You Have the Power* campaign.

For information regarding another combined electric procurement recently executed by GSA in Pennsylvania and Delaware, or to be added to our mailing list for future procurements, visit our web site at www.pbs3.gsa.gov/electric.htm or contact Barbara McPhelim via e-mail at barbara.mcphelim@gsa.gov or via phone at 215-656-6128.



GSA Project Manager John Morrell Honored by SSA



On December 5th, GSA's John Morrell was honored with a Social Security Administration (SSA) Associate Commissioner's Citation in recognition of his superior contributions to SSA and for his outstanding customer service and actions to expedite high priority projects.

"When there is an issue on a project, John is the guy who can resolve it," says Paul Murray, Director of the Office of Realty Management at SSA's Headquarters. "He is an excellent facilitator and innovative in his solutions."

Tracking John down to interview him for this article was no small task. John represents a new generation of project managers at GSA. He makes his office where the work is, and these days it's often on-site at SSA's headquarters in Woodlawn. His current project in construction, a renovation of SSA's Annex Building at their Woodlawn campus, is especially complex. The 319,000 square foot Annex Building is undergoing a complete renovation, from the exterior walls, to the building systems, to the interior finishes. This project is just one in a series of projects that will transform the aging, four million square foot Headquarters of SSA into an aesthetically pleasing, highly functional, modern campus. In addition to the building and site improvements, this massive, multi-phased effort will help realign and collocate SSA's work components to achieve greater efficiencies.

John's oversight of the Annex project has been greatly enhanced by a new extranet that was developed for that project and will also be available for subsequent projects at the complex. The site, secured from outside viewing via password protection, can be accessed by all project team members from GSA, SSA, and contract organizations. Virtually all project information is available on the site, thus allowing maximum flexibility for project team members to work anytime, anywhere.

John recently managed the completion of a renovation project that transformed the 202,000 square-foot, previous headquarters of the Health Care Financing Agency into new space for SSA. That project modernized all interior systems as well as the exterior façade of the buildings that are now known as the East High Rise and East Low Rise. He is also the project manager for a new child care center building, which is expected to be up and running at SSA's Woodlawn Campus in Spring 2003 (an official groundbreaking was held on Monday, December 18, 2000.) The Center will house approximately 300 children in a design that the project team describes as a village concept. John is slated to manage the renovation of SSA's Operations Building at Woodlawn when funding becomes available. At 800,000 square feet, this is the largest building on the campus.

John attributes his success so far to the dedication and talent of his entire team of GSA, SSA, and contract employees. Together they are forging a long-term partnership that greatly enhances the quality and speed of decision-making, and leads to successful projects and satisfied customers.

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